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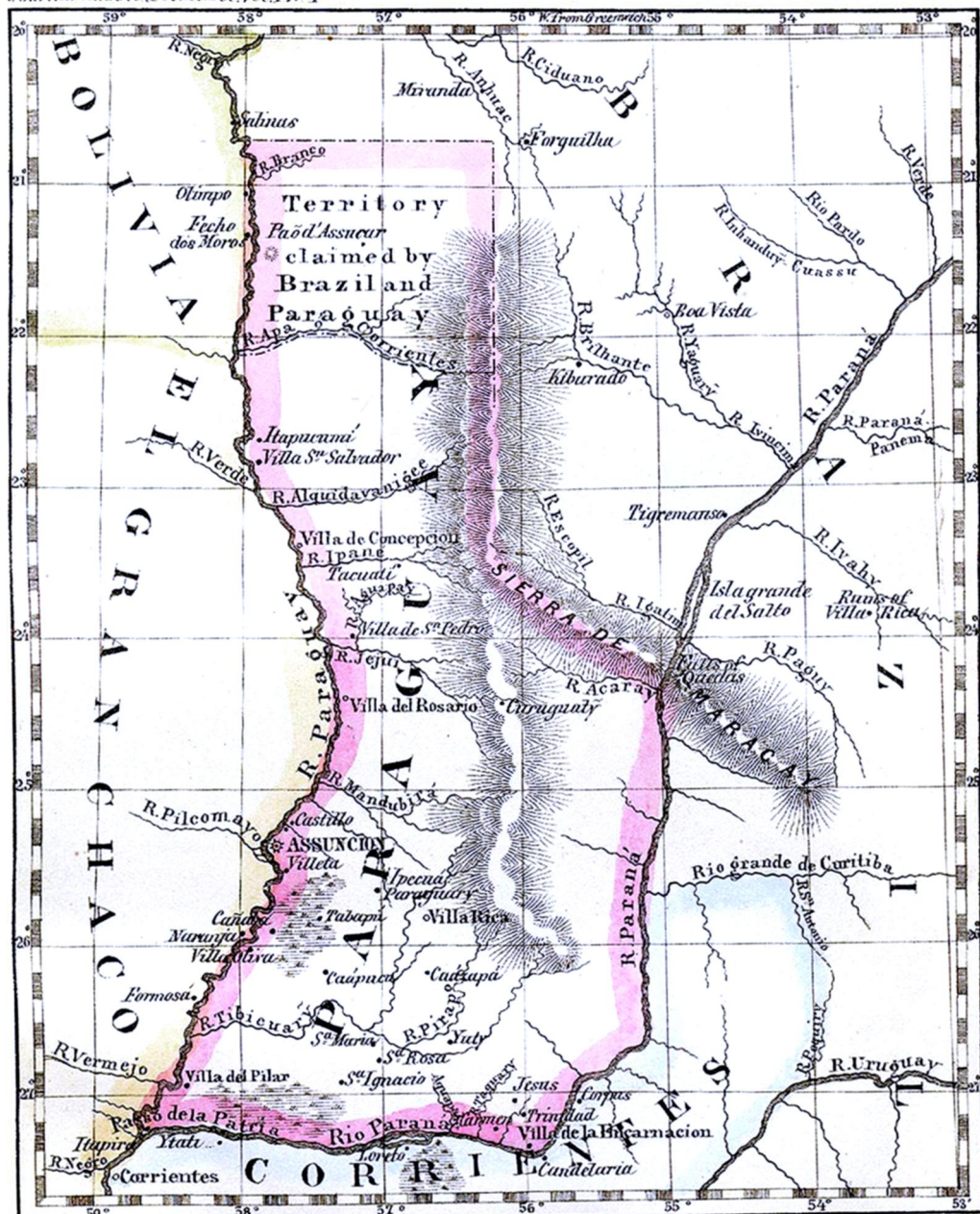
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PARAGUAY.

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PARAGUAY.*

Originally designating a vast region stretching northward to the 16th parallel of south latitude, and southward to the Straits of Magellan, and having an east and west extension from Brazil on the one side, and from the mountains on the eastern confines of Chili and Peru on the other side, the name Paraguay is now of more limited signification, and applied only to a comparatively small portion of its ancient territorial area, the present South American state of the same name.

* Recent events affecting our political and commercial relations with the Republic of Paraguay, have attracted public attention towards that country. Without expressing an opinion upon the necessity or policy of the expedition under Commander Page, which in accordance with the provisions of a resolution of Congress, has been fitted out and dispatched to the Rio de la Plata, it is nevertheless proper that a reference should be made thereto.

—The President of the United States, in his Annual Message to Congress of December, 1857, thus states the position of this country towards Paraguay: "It being desirable to ascertain the fitness of the River La Plata and its tributaries for navigation by steam, the United States steamer *Water-Witch* was sent thither for that purpose in 1853. This enterprise was successfully carried on until February, 1855, when, whilst in the peaceful prosecution of her voyage up the Parana River the steamer was fired upon by a Paraguayan fort. The fire was returned; but as the *Water-Witch* was of small force, and not designed for offensive operations she retired from the conflict. The pretext upon which the attack was made was a decree of the President of Paraguay, prohibiting foreign vessels-of-war from navigating the rivers of that state. As Paraguay, however, was the owner of but one bank of the river, the other belonging to Corrientes, a State of the Argentine Confederation, the right of its government to expect that such a decree would be obeyed cannot be acknowledged. But the *Water Witch* was not properly speaking a vessel-of-war. She was a small steamer engaged in a scientific enterprise, intended for the advantage of commercial states generally. Under these circumstances I am compelled to consider the attack upon her as unjustifiable, and as calling for satisfaction from the Paraguayan government.

"A demand for these purposes will be made in a firm but conciliatory spirit. This will the more probably be granted, if the Executive shall have authority to use other means in the event of a refusal. This is accordingly recommended."

Upon this recommendation, Congress authorized the Secretary of the Navy to equip a sufficient number of vessels and dispatch them to the La Plata. The fleet consists of 2 frigates, 2 sloops-of-war, 3 brigs, 12 armed steamers, and 2 armed store-ships. Of these, 1 sloop, 3 brigs, and 12 steamers, can ascend the river to Asuncion, the capital.

The Republic of Paraguay is situated between $21^{\circ} 20'$ and $27^{\circ} 18'$ of south latitude, and $54^{\circ} 20'$ and $58^{\circ} 40'$ of west longitude. It forms a very compact territory nearly in the shape of a parallelogram, about 420 miles long, north and south, with an average width of from 180 to 200 miles, with an area is computed at 86,000 square miles—about twice the superficies of the State of New York.

The northern limit of this country, towards Brazil, is only vaguely ascertained. In all other directions it enjoys the advantage of well-defined natural boundaries—the great river Parana on the east and south, and its scarcely less magnificent tributary, the Paraguay, on the west. At the southwest corner of the state the Paraguay joins the Parana, and the united stream taking a southerly course through the very heart of the Argentine Confederation, is joined by the Uruguay in latitude $34^{\circ} 20'$, and then merges its waters into the great estuary of La Plata. The state is thus accessible from the sea by one of the grandest river systems of the world, and several of its interior waters may be navigated by steamers of considerable tonnage.

The Paraguay and the Parana, however, differ greatly in their character as navigable rivers. The Paraguay is navigable in all its extent in this country, though its course is somewhat rapid in the north, near the rocky barrier, called Fecho dos Morros, ($21^{\circ} 20'$ N. lat.). Vessels of 300 tons may ascend it to Asuncion, and smaller vessels for several hundred miles further, and far within the boundaries of Brazil. The Parana which runs along the southern and eastern sides of the country is much less favorable to navigation. The great cataract, called Salto de Sette Quedas, near 24° S. latitude, forms an insuperable impediment, and even lower down there occurs several difficult passages where the river descends in long rapids over rocky shoals.

Almost insulated by these two rivers, the whole surface of the state belongs to their respective basins. A north and south mountain range of considerable elevation forms their

water-shed, sending the drainage in opposite directions. The distance of the water shed from the rivers scarcely anywhere exceeds a hundred miles, and hence the tributaries by which the drainage is conveyed are more remarkable for their number than for magnitude. By far the largest of these is the Tibicuary, which, owing to an easterly bend in the dividing ranges has its course considerably prolonged, and being augmented by several large affluents becomes a noble stream before it reaches the Paraguay.

The surface is also mountainous in the north-east, where a ramification known by the name of the Sierra de Maracay, breaks off from the central chain, and proceeding east to the banks of the Parana, interrupts the navigation of the river and forms one of the most remarkable cataracts in the world, and of which mention has already been made, under the name of the Salto de Sette Quedas. The river, which above the rapids is 12,600 feet wide, here enters a deep narrow gorge, and becoming suddenly contracted to 180 feet, pours down an immense flood with tremendous fury, and a noise which is heard at the distance of eighteen miles.

From the mountain region the surface rapidly descends, first presenting a finely diversified succession of lower heights, and then spreading out into rich alluvial plains, which not unfrequently in the immediate vicinity of the larger streams are converted into swamps and morasses.

The climate of Paraguay, though part of the country is within the tropics, has its excessive heats greatly modified by the inequalities of the surface; but concurs, with the natural fertility of the soil, in producing a vegetation of great luxuriance and grandeur. Unlike the open country surrounding it, Paraguay is well-wooded, and among its trees are many valuable in the arts and manufactures. It also abounds in medicinal productions, as rhubarb, sarsaparilla, jalap, sassafras, dragon's blood, capaiva, nux-vomica, liquorice, ginger, etc.; and in dye stuffs, as cochineal, indigo, vegetable vermillion, saffron, etc. Many of the forest trees yield valuable gums. The seringa, or rubber tree,

the products of which are now almost a monopoly with Para, and also the palo-santo, which produces the gum guaiacum, crowd the forests; and the sweet-flavored vanilla is abundant. Upon the hills the yerba mate, (*ilex Paraguensis*), flourishes luxuriantly, and furnishes the material of the universal beverage of South America. The plains pasture thousands of cattle, which though scarcely required for food in a country otherwise so richly provided, yield invaluable products in the shape of hides, tallow, hair, horns, bones, etc.

Thus, in all that constitutes an agricultural country—rich lands, a fine climate, and abundance of water—Paraguay has scarcely an equal. On the alluvial tracts, where cultivation is attempted with implements however primitive and imperfect, sugar cane, cotton, tobacco, rice, maize, and in short, the greater part of the most valuable products of the tropical and temperate zones are raised in profusion. If fully developed, indeed, this country would probably furnish a larger amount of human subsistence than any other tract of equal extent on the surface of the globe. Hitherto, however, various political causes have seriously interfered with its advancing prosperity. Its future can only be measured from its resources and fluvial facilities.

The wild animals of Paraguay include the jaguar or tiger, (of which there are great numbers); the puma or cougar, called also the American lion; the black bear, the ant-eater, the tapir, the capibara or water-hog, river-cavies, and various amphibious animals. Alligators are numerous in the Paraguay, and are of immense size. The wild boar, deer, and other species less known inhabit the forests; snakes, vipers, scorpions, etc., abound, and it is estimated that there are twenty different kinds of serpents, of which the rattle-snake is the most common. The boa-constrictor is found in the river swamps. Among the feathered tribes are the cassowary or American ostrich, the pea-fowl, parrots of various species, papagayos, parroquets, gold-finches, nightingales, and nine species of the humming-bird. Wild geese

abound on the rivers and lakes. Insects are found in great variety, and of extraordinary size.

The mineral resources of Paraguay are comparatively unknown; but it is supposed, and analogically proved, that both the precious and more useful minerals abound. About 17 leagues from the capital is a mountain called Acai, near which the inhabitants frequently find small lumps of silver. The policy of the government, however, has ever been to disclose as little on this subject as possible, and on one occasion a watchmaker, who had extracted gold from some ore found in the interior, was commanded by Francia, not to mention the circumstance on pain of death.

Authorities differ in estimating the amount of population in the country. Some say 300,000, others 1,000,000, and Hopkins makes it even 1,200,000 souls. The smallest estimate would make it more populous than other South American states. The dominant inhabitants are the descendants of Europeans from the north of Spain. Caste here is carried to a great extent, and the feeling of aversion which the white population entertains towards the natives, even the despotic power of Francia was unable to break down.

Of the Aboriginal tribe, the Guaranis, who inhabit the Chaco are the most numerous. The Paraguayans inhabiting the left bank of the Paraguay river are chiefly porters. A tribe called the Tobayas are a common enemy, and the government has often to make vigorous efforts to repel their inroads. Dr. Francia, however, appears to have succeeded in bringing these people into a more perfect state of civilization and subordination than has ever before been done with any nation of American Aborigines. The number of Indian villages and missions is very considerable. They generally consist of stone or mud houses covered with tiles, and have a large open square in the center in which is usually the priest's house and a church. The number of inhabitants in each is seldom less than 600, and often exceeds 2,000.

The religion of the country is the Roman Catholic, and none other is allowed to be pub-

licly exercised. Schools exist in every part of the republic, and the people are generally better educated than their neighbors in the bordering provinces. Every white male child, indeed, is obliged to attend the parish school until it has acquired the rudiments of an education. The public press consists of only two weekly newspapers, which circulate about 36,000 copies annually. The "Paraguay," issued at Asuncion, is the government organ.

The industrial position of Paraguay is probably superior to that of any other of the Spanish-American states. Secluded from commercial intercourse with foreign countries, the inhabitants have for centuries been obliged to supply their own wants. Thus, all the common handicrafts are known to them, and under Francia every one was obliged to labor at some useful occupation. Nothing whatever under his regime was brought into, or carried from the country. Since 1852, however, a new element has been added to the national industry, viz.: external commerce, which has already changed materially the aspect of affairs, and is constantly advancing.

In the years 1852-1856, the inter-changes—imports and exports and the total commerce—are reported as follows:

Years.	Imports.	Exports.	Total.
1852	\$540,150	\$474,499	\$1,015,549
1853	406,638	691,932	1,098,620
1854	535,523	777,457	1,362,980
1855	537,819	811,982	1,349,801
1856	610,865	1,006,059	1,616,924

The amount of tonnage employed in the foreign trade of Paraguay, in 1856, distinguishing the clearances and the entrances, and the nationality, was as follows:

Nationality.	Cleared.		Entered.	
	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.
British	4	1,165	4	1,165
French	1	84	1	84
Sardinian	3	705	3	705
Brazilian	1	27	1	27
Argentine } Buenos Ayrean }	147	6,937	139	6,440
Uruguayan	12	998	14	1,025
Paraguayan	22	1,461	9	477
Total	190	11,377	171	9,923
Of which, entered in ballast			85	3,268

The clearances for the 5 years ending with 1856, are stated in the following table :

Years.	Vessels.	Tons.	Men.
1852	90	4,813	599
1853	173	8,062	1,071
1854	165	7,694	1,065
1855 (10 months)	144	9,295	1,204
1856	190	11,377	1,458

And the following table gives the entrances for the same period :

Years.	Vessels.	Tons.	Men.
1852	93	5,192	612
1853	151	6,783	826
1854	160	7,888	1,028
1855	151	9,241	1,182
1856	171	9,923	1,267

The chief export is the yerba mate, the sale of which is a government monopoly, and which is seldom shipped on merchant's account. The next most valuable staple is tobacco (of very fine quality), of which in 1854 there was shipped 2,600,000 pounds; in 1855, 6,780,000 pounds, and in 1856 upwards of 8,000,000 pounds. The export of hides, raw and tanned, in 1856, was 35,000—a great diminution from former years. It is said that the production of this staple is falling off. Timber and dye woods, hair, leather, molasses, rum, almidon or starch corn, peanuts, beans, cigars and oranges, also enter into the export trade. The chief imports are foreign goods, principally English and French manufactured goods, wines, &c.

The coasting trade is not open to foreign bottoms, and is carried on solely by native boats. It is not of much present account. There is also a considerable contraband trade carried on over the Brazilian and Argentine frontiers.

Asuncion is the only port of entry open to foreign commerce. Encarnucion, Pilar, etc., are visited by Argentine and Buenos Ayrean vessels.

Previous to February, 1856, the amount of paper money in circulation was \$330,000. At that date a new issue was made of \$570,000—making the whole now in circulation \$900,000.

The revenue derived from customs on imports and exports averages about 10 per cent. on the value. The total revenue of the State is about \$750,000 per annum.

The only town of consideration in the republic is Asuncion, the capital. It is situated on the left bank of the Paraguay, a short distance above where it is joined by the Pilcomayo, 660 miles above Buenos Ayres, in latitude 25° 18' south, and longitude 57° 35' west. Originally a small Spanish fort, it has now become a place of some importance, and contains about 12,000 inhabitants. This is due to its advantageous position. It has a cathedral, three churches, four convents and monasteries, a college and theological seminary, and a hospital. Otherwise it is an ill-built and irregular town, most of the houses being built of mud, and the streets crooked and unpaved. The inhabitants carry on a considerable trade in tobacco, timber, hides and sugar, and especially in mate or Paraguay tea, with which Paraguay supplies nearly the whole of South America.

North from Asuncion are the towns of Castillo, Rosario, Concepcion and Itapucumi on the river, and San Pedro, Tacuate and Curugaty in the interior. South of the capital are the towns of Villeta, Olivia and Pilar. In the interior, towards the southeast, are Villa Rica and several other small towns; and on the Parana, near its southernmost bend, Encarnacion, Carmen, etc. These have populations varying from a few hundreds to one and two thousands, chiefly civilized Indians.

After the Spaniards had discovered the wide embouchure of La Plata, they sailed upwards and attempted to establish a colony on the banks of the river. But in two attempts of this kind they failed, the settlements having been destroyed by the Indians of the plains. In 1535 the, Adelantado, Don Pedro de Mendoza was sent out with a considerable number of vessels to found a great colony. He sailed up the Parana and Paraguay for nearly a thousand miles until he arrived at the present site of Asuncion, where he founded a town. From this point the Spaniards by degrees spread over all the countries of South America, south of the 20th parallel and east of the Andes.

In the 16th century the Jesuits were sent to these parts for the purpose of converting the

natives to Christianity. Their success, however, was not great until they obtained from the Spanish court a mandate, (1690), forbidding all other Spaniards to enter their missions without their permission.

The Jesuits, thus protected, settled among the numerous tribe called the Guaranis on both sides of the river Parana, above the island, of Apipe, and succeeded in bringing them to a certain degree of civilization. When the brotherhood were expelled in 1767, the missions were inhabited by more than 100,000 civilized Indians, of whom perhaps less than half the number were in Paraguay. They afterwards dispersed through the different parts of La Plata; but it seems that the majority settled in Paraguay, which, after that time, was entirely subjected to the viceroy of Buenos Ayres, and so continued, until the outbreak of the revolution which gave independence to all Spanish South America.

The dismemberment of the vice-royalty took place at the close of 1813. It began with Paraguay; but strictly speaking this republic could at no time be said to have formed any portion of the United Provinces as created by the patriots. It never joined in any confederacy with them; but at once in 1811 established on the ruins of the Spanish power, an independent government; and secured its independence from colonial vassalage more by the advantages of isolated position, than by any exertion on the part of the inhabitants.

Dr. Francia, whose history is that of the Republic from its independence, began his political career as secretary to the revolutionary junta in 1811. He afterwards became joint consul, and then sole consul, and in 1814 he was elected dictator for three years. In 1817 he caused himself to be elected dictator for life.

He now commenced that political system which has rendered him so famous in the world's history. He adopted as his established principle complete non-intercourse with all the world; and his government became more and more despotic at home, and the more a curse to the country. His tyranny, justly regarded as one

of the most remarkable political phenomena of modern times, was maintained by a system of espionage so vigorous, and at the same time so widely spread, as to bring fear and distrust into every household.

Robertson says that, ten years before the death of Francia, "the prisons were groaning with their inmates, commerce was paralyzed, vessels were rotting on the river-banks, produce going to decay in the warehouses, and the insolence of his soldiers was systematically encouraged as the best means of striking terror into the hearts of the crouching and insulted citizens. Distrust and fear pervaded every habitation, the nearest friends and relations were afraid of each other, despondency and despair were written on every countenance, and the only laughter heard in the city was that of Francia's soldiers over their revels in the barracks, or their exultation over the affronts offered to unoffending citizens in the streets."

Such is a picture of the country under the rule of this singular man.

At length, as full of crime as of years, Francia expired at the age of eighty-two—one of the few tyrants who have quietly died in their beds at an old age and in the plenitude of their power. He left his country impoverished, not a dollar in the treasury, and not a public or private paper of his administration unburned.

After his death (1840), a popular congress elected again two consuls to serve for two years, and the people once more breathed the air of liberty. The first acts of these magistrates were to declare the nation open to foreigners and universal commerce. In 1844 a constitutional government was established, at the head of which was placed as President, Don Carlos Antonio Lopez, who has continued and expanded the policy inaugurated by the consulate.

The benefits of this liberal arrangement, however, were for many years frustrated by the selfish policy of the government at Buenos Ayres, which, taking undue advantage of its command of the outlet of the Parana, was only too successful in crippling the trade, not only of Paraguay, but of the extensive regions be-

yond it, abounding in valuable products, to which the Parana and Paraguay furnished the only available means of transport.

This policy on the part of Buenos Ayres provoked a wide resistance, which was aided by France and England, and resulted in the flight of Rosas, the Dictator of that province, in February, 1852. This event at once changed the aspect of affairs. On the 1st of October following, in accordance with a decree of the Provisional Director of the Argentine Confederation, dated 31st August, the navigation of the Rio de la Plata, the Parana, and the Paraguay were opened to all foreign vessels, and on the 13th October of the same year, the representatives of the province of Buenos Ayres recognized the authority of the decree.

Thus the great rivers, after being closed against general commerce from the first occupation of the country by the Spaniards, were declared free. The consequences of this important concession are in the future, but there can be no doubt of its being the cause of an early development of the whole country drained by these magnificent streams, which have, according to a rough estimate, and including their navigable tributaries, a line of navigation not less than 10,000 miles in length.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

NO. 1.

A SERIES of articles upon the Geography of the United States, having very considerable reference to meteorological phenomena, appropriately commence with a description of the immediate valley of the Mississippi River, as it occupies the lowest depression in the great interior basin, and possesses a temperature and rain-fall less affected by causes disturbing what may be called a meteorological equilibrium, than any other portions of the continent at similar distances from the sea. The data thus obtained may be taken as a standard, or unit of measure, to which to refer the changes in the earth's surface as we leave either bank of the river,

and the consequent changes in meteoric conditions—a method of proceeding which will greatly simplify and facilitate future enquiry.

At the mouth of the Mississippi River, the astronomical, and actual or observed, mean temperatures, very nearly coincide. At New Orleans, (104 miles from its mouth), which is elevated only ten feet above the Gulf, in lat. 30° N., the astronomical mean temperature is $71^{\circ} 01'$, while the observed mean temperature is 69° *Fahr.* On proceeding northwardly, the difference between the two rapidly increases, owing to the increased elevation of the bed of the river, and to the influence of the lofty plateaus and mountain ranges that form the boundaries of its hydrographic basin. On the parallel of 35° the astronomical mean temperature is $67^{\circ} 17'$; the observed mean 60° . On the parallel of 40° the astronomical is $62^{\circ} 81'$; the observed 53° ; and on the parallel of 45° the astronomical is $57^{\circ} 98'$; the observed mean temperature $44\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. Other meteorological changes, particularly in the amount of rain-fall, follow, though not with similar regularity or extent. To show the degree of the southerly slope of the great basin of the Mississippi, and how far, what may be termed normal conditions are affected as it is ascended, a tabular statement is subjoined of the latitude of the several points of observation; their distances from the Gulf, and from each other; their elevation* above the sea; the rate of the descent of the river between them; their mean annual temperatures and rain-fall—with their respective means for the seasons. The authority for altitudes is

* The only interruption to the general character of the Mississippi from the Gulf of Mexico to the Falls of St. Anthony, are the Des Moines and Rock Island Rapids. At both of these, the river runs for a considerable distance over beds of solid rock, having inclinations, as will be seen in the table, of nearly two feet to the mile. In stages of high water they present no obstacle to the passage of the largest class steamers; but at low water, only boats of light draft can pass them. The falls on the Ohio at Louisville, and on the Wabash at Vincennes, are of a similar character, and are probably caused by a continuation of the same outcrop, that causes the Rapids at the mouth of the Des Moines River. With these exceptions, the river below the mouth of the Ohio has a muddy bed; north of this point the river bed of gravel or sand, the solid rock appearing, we believe, is only in the instances named.